

CREDITING JUICE

in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP)

To be served in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school nutrition programs, juice must be pasteurized full-strength 100 percent juice. At lunch, fruit juice cannot exceed half of weekly fruit offerings and vegetable juice cannot exceed half of weekly vegetable offerings. At breakfast, fruit juice together with vegetable juice cannot exceed half of the weekly fruit offerings.

Juice does not provide the same nutritional benefits as whole fruits and vegetables. Whole fruits and vegetables should be served most often, as recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. If juice is served, schools must comply with the weekly juice limits for each meal and grade group (see charts below).



WEEKLY JUICE LIMITS AT LUNCH

At lunch, fruit juice cannot exceed half of the total amount of fruits offered during the week and vegetable juice cannot exceed half of the total amount of vegetables offered during the week. The charts below show the maximum weekly contribution of juice at lunch based on the meal pattern requirements for fruits and vegetables.



Crediting Fruit Juice at Lunch						
Grade Group	FIVE-DAY WEEK			SEVEN-DAY WEEK		
	Required Weekly Servings	Maximum Weekly Juice Contribution	Maximum Weekly $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup Servings	Required Weekly Servings	Maximum Weekly Juice Contribution	Maximum Weekly $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup Servings
K-5	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups	2	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups	3
6-8	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups	2	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups	3
9-12	5 cups	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	5	7 cups	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	7

Crediting Vegetable Juice at Lunch						
Grade Group	FIVE-DAY WEEK			SEVEN-DAY WEEK		
	Required Weekly Servings	Maximum Weekly Juice Contribution	Maximum Weekly $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup Servings	Required Weekly Servings	Maximum Weekly Juice Contribution	Maximum Weekly $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup Servings
K-5	3 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups	1 $\frac{7}{8}$ cups	3	5 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups	2 $\frac{5}{8}$ cups	5
6-8	3 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups	1 $\frac{7}{8}$ cups	3	5 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups	2 $\frac{5}{8}$ cups	5
9-12	5 cups	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	5	7 cups	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	7

CREDITING JUICE, continued

For **grades 9-12**, schools can serve $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit juice and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetable juice each day, for both five-day and seven-day weeks. If juice is offered daily, menu planners must be careful not to exceed the weekly calorie limit of the USDA's dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for school meals. Juice contains more calories than whole fruits and vegetables. For example, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of grape juice contains 76 calories and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fresh grapes contains 34 calories. This also applies to canned fruit with juice, e.g., 1 cup of fresh sliced peaches contains 60 calories and 1 cup of canned sliced peaches in juice contains 109 calories



For **grades K-5 and 6-8**, schools can serve $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit juice twice per week and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetable juice three times per week for five-day weeks. For seven-day weeks, schools can serve $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit juice three times per week and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetable juice five times per week. Alternatively, menu planners could choose to serve larger quantities of juice on one or two days a week if the weekly total does not exceed half of the total fruit or vegetable offerings. For example, a five-day lunch menu for grades 6-8 could offer 1 cup of fruit juice once a week instead of offering $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit juice twice a week.

No more than half of the weekly offerings of fruits or vegetables may be in the form of full-strength juice. The weekly juice limit is calculated based on the amount of fruits or vegetables that children are allowed to select. Cafeteria menus and signage must clearly indicate the specific amount of juice that students can select with each meal, for example, "choose one fruit and one juice."

Crediting Juice toward the Vegetable Subgroups

Juice blends are creditable if they are a combination of full-strength fruit juices or full-strength fruit and vegetable juices. At lunch, 100 percent fruit and vegetable juice blends credit based on the first ingredient. If the first juice ingredient is fruit juice, the product contributes to the fruits component. If the first juice ingredient is vegetable juice, the product contributes to the "other" or the "additional" vegetables requirement, depending on the needs of the menu planner. The ingredients statement below shows an example of a juice blend that credits toward the vegetables component. For more information on the vegetable subgroups, see the CSDE's handout, [Vegetable Subgroups](#).

Crediting Fruit and Vegetable Juice Blends

If the first ingredient in a full-strength 100 percent juice blend is a fruit juice, the juice blend contributes to the fruits requirement. If the first ingredient is a vegetable juice, the juice blend contributes to the "other" or "additional" vegetable requirements, depending on the needs of the menu planner. The ingredients statement below shows an example of a vegetable and fruit juice blend that credits toward the vegetables component.

INGREDIENTS: Reconstituted vegetable juice blend (water and concentrated juices of **SWEET POTATOES, purple carrots, carrots**), reconstituted fruit juices (water and concentrated juices of apples, white grapes, cranberries, blackberries), contains less than 2% of: natural flavoring, citric acid, lemon juice concentrate, vitamin C (ascorbic acid), malic acid, vitamin E (alpha tocopherol acetate).



Calculating Weekly Juice Offerings at Lunch

An “offering” of fruits or vegetables is the amount students can select at a given meal, regardless of the number of options or variety of fruits or vegetables available. Menu planners must calculate the weekly juice offerings by dividing the total amount of fruit juice available at all lunches during the week by the total offering of fruits, and dividing the total amount of vegetable juice available at all lunches during the week by the total offering of vegetables. When calculating the total amount of juice available at lunch, menu planners must count all sources of 100 percent juice served during the week including:

- juice that is fresh, frozen or made from concentrate;
- frozen juice pops made from 100 percent juice;
- pureed fruits or vegetables in fruit/vegetable smoothies; and
- juice from canned fruit served in 100 percent juice, unless the canned fruit is drained. Canned fruit in light syrup or water does not count toward the weekly juice limit.



The chart below shows a sample calculation for determining whether a five-day lunch menu meets the weekly fruit juice limit. This menu offers a daily variety of ½-cup fruit servings, including drained canned fruit, fresh fruit and 100 percent fruit juice. Students can select two ½-cup servings of fruit daily (1 cup total) but no more than ½ cup of juice. Since the menu offers 1 cup of fruit daily, the weekly fruit offering is 5 cups. Since the menu offers ½ cup of fruit juice daily, the weekly juice offering is 2 ½ cups. This menu meets the weekly juice limit because the weekly juice offerings are half (50 percent) of the weekly fruits offered to students. For crediting information on juice, see the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals](#).

Table 3-5. Calculating Compliance with Weekly Fruit Juice Limit for a Five-day Lunch Menu		
DAILY FRUIT CHOICES ½ cup each Choose TWO Fruits OR Choose ONE Fruit and ONE Juice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drained canned fruit * • Fresh fruit • 100 percent fruit juice 	STEP 1 – CALCULATE TOTAL WEEKLY FRUIT OFFERINGS	
	Multiply the total daily amount of fruit that students are allowed to select by the number of days in the week. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can select two ½-cup serving (1 cup) daily: 1 cup multiplied by 5 days equals 5 cups. 	Weekly Fruit: 5 cups
	STEP 2 – CALCULATE TOTAL WEEKLY JUICE OFFERINGS	
	Multiply the total daily amount of juice that students are allowed to select by the number of days in the week. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can select one ½-cup serving daily: ½ cup multiplied by 5 days equals 2 ½ cups. 	Weekly Juice: 2 ½ cups
	STEP 3 – CALCULATE WEEKLY PERCENTAGE OF JUICE OFFERINGS	
	Divide the total weekly juice offerings from step 2 by the total weekly fruit offerings from step 1 and multiply by 100. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 ½ cups divided by 5 cups equals 0.5 multiplied by 100 equals 50 percent. Are juice offerings 50 percent or less? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Percent Juice: 50 percent
* In this example, the canned fruit in 100 percent juice is drained. If canned fruit in 100 percent juice is not drained, the juice counts toward the weekly juice limit.		

CREDITING JUICE, continued

WEEKLY JUICE LIMITS AT BREAKFAST

At breakfast, fruit juice together with vegetable juice and vegetable/fruit juice blends cannot exceed half of the total fruits offered over the week. The chart below shows the maximum weekly contribution of juice at breakfast based on the meal pattern requirement for fruits.

Crediting Fruit Juice at Breakfast *						
Grade Group	FIVE-DAY WEEK			SEVEN-DAY WEEK		
	Required Weekly Servings	Maximum Weekly Juice Contribution	Maximum Weekly ½-cup Servings	Required Weekly Servings	Maximum Weekly Juice Contribution	Maximum Weekly ½-cup Servings
K-5	5 cups	2 ½ cups	5	7 cups	3 ½ cups	7
6-8	5 cups	2 ½ cups	5	7 cups	3 ½ cups	7
9-12	5 cups	2 ½ cups	5	7 cups	3 ½ cups	7

* The breakfast meal pattern does not include a vegetables component. Vegetables (including juice) may be substituted for fruits, but the first two cups per week must be from the dark green, red/orange, beans and peas (legumes) or “other” vegetable subgroups.

Calculating Weekly Fruit and Juice Offerings at Breakfast

Menu planners calculate the weekly juice offerings by dividing the total amount of fruit and vegetable juice available at all breakfasts during the week by the total weekly offering of fruits. Schools can serve ½ cup of juice daily at breakfast because the meal pattern requires 1 cup of fruits daily for all grade groups. When calculating the total amount of juice available at breakfast, menu planners must include all sources of 100 percent juice served over the week, e.g., fresh and frozen juice, juice in canned fruit and pureed fruit in smoothies. For more information, see “Calculating Weekly Juice Offerings at Lunch” on page 3.



For more information, see the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals](#) and [Meal Patterns](#) and [Crediting Foods](#) Web pages or contact the [school nutrition programs](#) staff in the CSDE Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal and, where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax 202-690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339; or 800-845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

The State of Connecticut Department of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The Department of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability (including, but not limited to, intellectual disability, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws. The Department of Education does not unlawfully discriminate in employment and licensing against qualified persons with a prior criminal conviction. Inquiries regarding the Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to: Lery Gillespie, Equal Employment Opportunity Director/ Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator, State of Connecticut Department of Education, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457, 860-807-2101, Lery.Gillespie@ct.gov.